

8177 a 83  
~~8176 a 64~~  
T H E

# AMERICAN CRISIS.

N U M B E R V.

ADDRESSED TO

GENERAL SIR WILLIAM HOWE,

B Y T H E

AUTHOR OF COMMON SENSE,

---

L A N C A S T E R :

PRINTED by JOHN DUNLAP,  
M,DCC,LXXVIII.

[ Price 2s. 6d. single—2s. by the quantity. ]



---

T H E  
A M E R I C A N C R I S I S.  
N U M B E R V.

---

TO GENERAL SIR WILLIAM HOWE.

**T**O argue with a man who has renounced the use and authority of reason, and whose philosophy consists in holding humanity in contempt, is like administering medicine to the dead, or endeavouring to convert an Atheist by scripture. Enjoy, Sir, your insensibility of feeling and reflecting. It is the prerogative of animals. And no man will envy you those honours, in which a savage only can be your rival and a bear your master.

As the generosity of this country rewarded your brother's services last war with an elegant monument in Westminster Abbey, it is consistent that she should bestow some mark of distinction upon you. You certainly deserve her notice, and a conspicuous place in the catalogue of extraordinary persons. Yet it would be pity to pass you from the world in haste, and consign you to magnificent oblivion among the tombs, without telling the future beholder why. Judas is as much known as John, yet history ascribes their fame to very different actions.

Sir William hath undoubtedly merited a monument; But of what kind, or with what inscription, where placed or how embellished, is a question that would puzzle all the Heralds of St James's in the profoundest mood of historical deliberation. We are at a loss, Sir, to ascertain your real character, but somewhat perplexed how to perpetuate it's identity, and preserve it



uninjured from the transformations of time or mistake. A statuary may give a false expression to your bust, or decorate it with some equivocal emblems, by which you may happen to steal into reputation and impose upon the hereafter traditionary world. Ill nature or ridicule may conspire, or a variety of accidents combine, to lessen, enlarge, or change Sir William's fame; and no doubt but he who has taken so much pains to be singular in his conduct, would choose to be just as singular in his exit, his monument and his epitaph.

The usual honours of the dead, to be sure, are not sufficiently sublime to escort a character like you to the republic of dust and ashes; for however men may differ in their ideas of grandeur or government here, the grave is nevertheless a perfect republic. Death is not the monarch of the dead, but of the dying. The moment he obtains a conquest he loses a subject, and, like the foolish King you serve, will, in the end, war himself out of all dominion.

As a proper preliminary towards the arrangement of your funeral honors, we readily admit your new rank of *Knighthood*. The title is perfectly in character, and is your own, more by merit than creation. There are Knights of various orders from the Knight of the Windmill to the Knight of the Post. The former is your patron for exploits, and the latter will assist you in settling your accounts. No honorary title could be more happily applied! The ingenuity is sublime! And your royal master hath discovered more genius in fitting you therewith, than in generating the most finished figure for a button, or discanting on the properties of a button-mould.

But how, Sir, shall we dispose of you? The invention of the Statuary is exhausted, and Sir William is yet unprovided with a monument. America is anxious to bestow her funeral favors upon you, and wishes to do it in a manner that shall distinguish you from all the deceased heroes of the last war. The *Egyptian method of embalming* is not known to the present age, and hieroglyphical pageantry hath out-lived the science



ence of decyphering it. Some other method, therefore, must be thought of to immortalize the new Knight of the Windmill and Post. Sir William, thanks to his stars, is not oppressed with very delicate ideas. He has no ambition of being wrapt up and handed about in myrrh, aloes and cassia. Less chargeable odors will suffice ; and it fortunately happens, that the simple genius of America hath discovered the art of preserving bodies and embellishing them too, with much greater frugality than the ancients. In a balmage, Sir, of humble tar, you will be as secure as Pharoah, and in a hieroglyphic of feathers rival in finery all the mummies of Egypt.

As you have already made your exit from the moral world, and by numberless acts both of passionate and deliberate injustice engraved an " HERE LYETH " on your deceased honor, it must be meer affectation in you to pretend concern at the humours or opinions of mankind respecting you. What remains of you may expire at any time. The sooner the better. For he who survives his reputation, lives out of spite to himself, like a man listening to his own reproach.

Thus entombed and ornamented I leave you to the inspection of the curious, and return to the history of your yet surviving actions.—The character of Sir William hath undergone some extraordinary revolutions since his arrival in America. It is now fix'd and known ; and we have nothing to hope from your candor or to fear from your capacity. Indolence and inability have too large a share in your composition ever to suffer you to be any thing more than the hero of little villainies and unfinished adventures. That, which to some persons appeared moderation in you at first, was not produced by any real virtue of your own, but by a contrast of passions dividing and holding you in perpetual irresolution. One vice will frequently expel another without the least merit in the man, as powers in contrary directions reduce each other to rest.

It became you, to have supported a dignified solemnity of character; to have shewn a superior liberality of soul; to have won respect by an obstinate perseverance in maintaining order, and to have exhibited, on all occasions, such an unchangeable graciousness of conduct, that while we beheld in you the resolution of an enemy we might admire in you the sincerity of a man. You came to America under the high-sounding titles of Commander and Commissioner; not only to suppress what you called rebellion by arms, but to shame it out of countenance by the excellence of your example. Instead of which, you have been the patron of low and vulgar frauds, the encourager of Indian cruelties; and have imported a cargo of vices blacker than those you pretended to suppress.

Mankind are not universally agreed in their determination of right and wrong; but there are certain actions which the consent of all nations and individuals hath branded with the unchangeable name of MEANNESS. In the list of human vices we find some of such a refined constitution, that they cannot be carried into practice without seducing some virtue to their assistance; but *meanness* hath neither alliance nor apology. It is generated in the dust and sweepings of other vices, and is of such a hateful figure that all the rest conspire to disown it. Sir William, the Commissioner of George the Third, hath at last vouchsafed to give it rank and pedigree. He has placed the fugitive at the Council Board, and dubbed it companion of the order of knighthood.

The particular act of meanness which I allude to in this description, is forgery. You, Sir, have abetted and patronised the forging and uttering counterfeit continental bills. In the same New-York news-papers in which your own proclamation under your master's authority was published, offering, or pretending to offer, pardon and protection to the inhabitants of these States, there were repeated advertisements of counterfeit money for sale, and persons who have come officially from you and under sanction of your flag, have been taken up in attempting to put them off. A

A conduct so basely mean in a public character is without precedent or pretence. Every nation on earth, whether friends or enemies, will unite in despising you. 'Tis an incendiary war upon society which nothing can excuse or palliate—An improvement upon beggarly villainy—and shews an inbred wretchedness of heart made up between the venomous malignity of a serpent and the spiteful imbecility of an inferior reptile.

The laws of any civilized country would condemn you to the gibbet without regard to your rank or titles, because it is an action foreign to the usage and custom of war; and should you fall into our hands, which pray God you may, it will be a doubtful matter whether we are to consider you as a military prisoner or a prisoner for felony.

Besides, it is exceedingly unwise and impolitic in you, or any persons in the English service, to promote, or even encourage, or wink at, the crime of forgery in any case whatever. Because, as the riches of England, as a nation, is chiefly in paper, and the far greater part of trade among individuals is carried on by the same medium, that is, by notes and drafts on one another, they, therefore, of all people in the world ought to endeavour to keep forgery out of sight, and, if possible, not to revive the idea of it. It is dangerous to make men familiar with a crime which they may afterwards practise to much greater advantage against those who first taught them. Several officers in the English army have made their exit at the gallows for forgery on their agents; for we all know, who know any thing of England, that there is not a more necessitous body of men, taking them generally, than what the English officers are. They contrive to make a shew at the expence of the taylor, and appear clean at the charge of the washer-woman.

England hath at this time nearly two hundred millions pounds sterling of public money in paper, for which she hath no real property, besides a large circulation of bank notes, bank post bills, and promissary  
notes



notes and drafts of private bankers, merchants and tradesmen. She hath the greatest quantity of paper currency and the least quantity of gold and silver of any nation in Europe; the real specie, which is about sixteen millions sterling, serve only as change in large sums, which are always made in paper, or for payment in small ones. Thus circumstanced, the nation is put to its wit's ends, and obliged to be severe almost to criminality, to prevent the practice and growth of forgery. Scarcely a session passes at the Old Bailey, or an execution at Tyburn, but witnesseth this truth. Yet you, Sir, regardless of the policy which her necessity obliges her to adopt, have made your whole army intimate with the crime. And as all armies, at the conclusion of a war, are too apt to carry into practice the vices of the campaign, it will probably happen, that England will hereafter abound in forgeries, to which Art, the practitioners were first initiated under your authority in America. You, Sir, have the honor of adding a new vice to the military catalogue; and the reason, perhaps, why the invention was reserved for you, is, because no General before was mean enough even to think of it.

That a man whose soul is absorbed in the low traffic of vulgar vice, is incapable of moving in any superior region, is clearly shewn in you by the event of every campaign. Your military exploits have been without plan, object or decision. Can it be possible that you or your employers can suppose the possession of Philadelphia to be any ways equal to the expence or expectation of the nation which supports you? What advantages does England derive from any achievements of yours? To *her* it is perfectly indifferent what place you are in, so long as the business of conquest is unperformed and the charge of maintaining you remains the same.

If the principal events of the three campaigns be attended to, the balance will appear strongly against you at the close of each; but the last, in point of importance to us, hath exceeded the former two. It is

is pleasant to look back on dangers past, and equally as pleasant to meditate on present ones when the way out begins to appear. *That* period is now arrived, and the long doubtful winter of war is changing to the sweeter prospects of victory and joy. At the close of the campaign in seventy-five, you were obliged to retreat from Boston. In the summer seventy-six, you appeared with a numerous fleet and army in the harbour of New-York. By what miracle the Continent was preserved in that season of danger is a subject of admiration! If instead of wasting your time against Long-Island, you had run up the North River and landed any where above New-York, the consequence must have been, that either you would have compelled General Washington to fight you with very unequal numbers, or he must have suddenly evacuated the city with the loss of nearly all the stores of the army, or have surrendered for want of provisions, the situation of the place naturally producing one or other of these events.

The preparations made to defend New-York were, nevertheless, wise and military; because your forces were then at sea, their numbers uncertain; storms, sickness, or a variety of accidents might have disabled their coming, or so diminished them on their passage, that those which survived would have been incapable of opening the campaign with any prospect of success; in which case, the defence would have been sufficient and the place preserved; for cities that have been raised from nothing with an infinitude of labor and expence, are not to be thrown away on the bare probability of their being taken. On these grounds, the preparations made to maintain New-York were as judicious as the retreat afterwards. While you, in the interim, let slip the *very* opportunity which seemed to put conquest in your power.

Through the whole of that campaign you had nearly double the forces which General Washington immediately commanded. The principal plan, at that time, on our part, was to wear away the season with as little loss as possible, and to raise the army for the next year. Long-Island, New-York, Forts Washington and Lee were

B

not

not defended, after your superior force was known, under any expectation of their being finally maintained but as a range of out works, in the attacking of which your time might be wasted, your numbers reduced, and your vanity amused by possessing them on our retreat. It was intended to have withdrawn the garrison from Fort Washington after it had answered the former of those purposes, but the fate of that day put a prize into your hands without much honour to yourselves.

Your progress through the Jerseys was accidental; you had it not even in contemplation, or you would not have sent so principal a part of your force to Rhode-Island before-hand. The utmost hope of America in the year seventy-six reached no higher than that she might not *then* be conquered. She had no expectation of defeating you in that campaign. Even the most cowardly Tory allowed, that, could she withstand the shock of *that* summer her independence would be past a doubt. You had *then* greatly the advantage of her. You were formidable. Your military knowledge was supposed to be compleat. Your fleets and forces arrived without an accident. You had neither experience nor reinforcements to wait for. You had nothing to do but to begin, and your chance lay in the first vigorous onset.

America was young and unskilled. She was obliged to trust her defence to time and practice; and hath, by meer dint of perseverance, maintained her cause, and brought her enemy to a condition, in which, she is now capable of meeting him on any grounds.

It is remarkable that in the campaign of seventy-six, you gained no more, notwithstanding your great force, than what was given you by consent or evacuation, except Fort Washington: While every advantage obtained by us was by fair and hard fighting. The defeat of Sir Peter Parker was compleat. The conquest of the Hessians at Trenton by the remains of a retreating army, which, but a few days before, you affected to despise, is an instance of heroic perseverance very seldom to be met with. And the victory over the British troops at Princeton, by a harraßed and wearied party, who had been engaged the day before and marched all night without refreshment, is attended with such a scene of circumstances



stances and superiority of Generalship, as will ever give it a place on the first line in the history of great actions.

When I look back on the gloomy days of last winter and see America suspended by a thread, I feel a triumph of joy at the recollection of her delivery, and a reverence for the characters which snatched her from destruction. To doubt *now* would be a species of infidelity, and to forget the instruments which saved us *then* would be ingratitude.

The close of that campaign left us with the spirits of conquerors. The Northern districts were relieved by the retreat of General Carleton over the lakes. The army under your command were hunted back and had their bounds prescribed. The Continent began to feel its military importance, and the winter passed pleasantly away in preparations for the next campaign.

However confident you might be on your first arrival, the course of the year seventy-six gave you some idea of the difficulty, if not impossibility, of conquest. To this reason I ascribe your delay in opening the campaign in seventy-seven. The face of matters, on the close of the former year, gave you no encouragement to pursue a discretionary war as soon as the spring admitted the taking the field; for though conquest, in that case, would have given you a double portion of fame, yet the experiment was too hazardous. The Ministry, had you failed, would have shifted the whole blame upon you, charged you with having acted without orders, and condemned at once both your plan and your execution.

To avoid those misfortunes, which might have involved you and your money accounts in perplexity and suspicion, you prudently waited the arrival of a plan of operations from England, which was, that you should proceed for Philadelphia by the way of Chesapeak, and that Burgoyne, after reducing Ticonderoga, should take his route by Albany, and, if necessary, join you.

The splendid laurels of the last campaign have flourished in the North. In that quarter America hath surprised the world, and laid the foundation of her this year's glory. The conquest of Ticonderoga (if it may be called a conquest) has, like all your other victories,

led on to ruin. Even the provisions taken in that fortress, (which by General Burgoyne's return was sufficient in bread and flour for nearly 5000 men for ten weeks, and in beef and pork for the same number of men for one month) served only to hasten his overthrow, by enabling him to proceed for Saratoga the place of his destruction. A short review of the operations of the last campaign will shew the condition of affairs on both sides.

You have taken Ticonderoga and marched into Philadelphia. These are all the events which the year hath produced on your part. A trifling campaign indeed, compared with the expences of England and the conquest of the Continent. On the other side, a considerable part of your Northern force has been routed by the New-York militia under General Herkimer. Fort Stanwix hath bravely survived a compounded attack of soldiers and savages, and the besiegers have fled. The battle of Bennington has put a thousand prisoners into our hands, with all their arms, stores, artillery and baggage. General Burgoyne in two engagements has been defeated; himself, his army, and all that were his and theirs are now ours. Ticonderoga and Independence are retaken, and not the shadow of an enemy remains in all the Northern districts. At this instant we have upwards of eleven thousand prisoners, between sixty and seventy pieces of brass ordnance, besides small arms, tents, stores, &c. &c.

In order to know the real value of those advantages we must reverse the scene, and suppose General Gates, and the force he commanded, to be at your mercy as prisoners, and General Burgoyne with his army of soldiers and savages to be already joined to you in Pennsylvania. So dismal a picture can scarcely be looked at. It hath all the traces and colourings of horror and despair; and excites the most swelling emotions of gratitude by exhibiting the miseries we are so graciously preserved from.

I admire this distribution of laurels around the Continent. It is the earnest of future union. South-Carolina has had her day of suffering and of fame; and the other Southern States have exerted themselves in proportion to the force that invaded or insulted them. Towards the close of the campaign in seventy-six, these middle States were

were called upon and did their duty nobly. They were witnesses to the almost expiring flame of human freedom. It was the close struggle of life and death. The line of invifible divifion; and on which, the unabated fortitude of a Washington prevailed, and faved the fpark, that has fince blazed in the North with unrivalled luftre.

Let me ask, Sir, what great exploits have you performed? Through all the variety of changes and opportunities which this war hath produced, I know no one action of yours that can be ftiled matterly. You have moved in and out, backward and forward, round and round, as if valor confifted in a military jig. The hiftory and figure of your movements would be truly ridiculous could they be juftly delineated. They refemble the labors of a puppy purfuing his tail; the end is ftill at the fame diftance, and all the turnings round muft be done over again.

The firft appearance of affairs at Ticonderoga wore fuch an unpromifing afpect, that it was neceffary, in July, to detach a part of the forces to the fupport of that quarter, which were otherwife deftined or intended to act againft you, and this, perhaps, has been the means of poftponing your downfall to another campaign. The deftruction of one army at a time is work enough. We know, Sir, what we are about, what we have to do, and how to do it.

Your progrefs from Chelapeak was marked by no capital ftroke of policy or heroifm. Your principal aim was to get General Washington between the Delaware and Schuylkill and between Philadelphia and your army. In that fituation, with a river on each of his flanks, which united about five miles below the city, and your army above him, you could have intercepted his reinforcements and fupplies, cut off all his communication with the country, and, if neceffary, have difpatched affiftance to open a paffage for General Burgoyne. This fcheme was too vifible to fucceed, for had General Washington fuffered you to command the open country above him, I think it a very reafonable conjecture that the conqueft of Burgoyne would not have taken place, becaufe you could, in that cafe, have relieved him. It was therefore  
neceffary,



necessary, while that important victory was in suspense, to trepan *you* into a situation, in which you could only be on the defensive without the power of affording him assistance. The manœuvre had its effect and Burgoyne was conquered.

There has been something unmilitarily passive in you from the time of your passing the Schuylkill and getting possession of Philadelphia to the close of the campaign. You mistook a trap for a conquest, the probability of which had been made known to Europe, and the edge of your triumph taken off by our own information long before.

Having got you into this situation, a scheme for a general attack upon you at Germantown was carried into execution on the fourth of October, and though the success was not equal to the excellence of the plan, yet the attempting it proved the genius of America to be on the rise and her power approaching to superiority. The obscurity of the morning was your best friend, for a fog is always favorable to a hunted enemy. Some weeks after this, you, likewise, planned an attack on General Washington while at Whitemarsh, marched out with infinite parade, but on finding him preparing to attack you the next morning, you prudently cut about and retreated to Philadelphia with all the precipitation of a man conquered in imagination.

Immediately after the battle of Germantown, the probability of Burgoyne's defeat gave a new policy to affairs in Pennsylvania, and it was judged most consistent with the general safety of America to wait the issue of the Northern campaign. Slow and sure is sound work. The news of that victory arrived in our camp on the 18th of October, and no sooner did the shout of joy and the report of the thirteen cannon reach your ears, than you resolved upon a retreat, and the next day, that is, on the 19th, withdrew your drooping army into Philadelphia. This movement was evidently dictated by fear; and carried with it a positive confession that you dreaded a second attack. It was hiding yourself among women and children, and sleeping away the choicest part of a campaign in expensive inactivity. An army in a city can  
never

never be a conquering army. The situation admits only of defence. It is meer shelter; and every military power in Europe will conclude you to be eventually defeated.

The time when you made this retreat was the very time you ought to have fought a battle, in order to put yourself in a condition of recovering in Pennsylvania what you had lost at Saratoga. And the reason why you did not, must be either prudence or cowardice; the former supposes your inability, and the latter needs no explanation. I draw no conclusions, Sir, but such as are naturally deduced from known and visible facts, and such as will always have a being while the facts which produced them remain unaltered.

After this retreat a new difficulty arose which exhibited the power of Britain in a very contemptible light, which was the attack and defence of Mud-Island. For several weeks did that little unfinished fortress stand out against all the attempts of Admiral and General Howe. It was the fable of Bender realized on the Delaware. Scheme after scheme and force upon force were tried and defeated. The garrison, with scarce any thing to cover them but their bravery, survived in the midst of mud, shot and shells, and were at last obliged to give it up more to the powers of time and gun-powder than to the military superiority of the besiegers.

It is my sincere opinion that matters are in a much worse condition with you than what is generally known. Your master's speech at the opening of Parliament is like a soliloquy on ill luck. It shews him to be coming a little to his reason, for sense of pain is the first symptom of recovery in profound stupefactions. His condition is deplorable. He is obliged to submit to all the insults of France and Spain without daring to know or resent them, and thankful for the most trivial evasions to the most humble remonstrances. The time *was* when he could not *deign* an answer to a petition from America, and the time now *is* when he dare not *give* an answer to an affront from France. The capture of Burgoyne's army will sink his consequence as much in Europe as in America. In his speech he expresses his suspicions at the warlike preparations of France and Spain, and as he has only  
the

the one army which you command to support his character in the world with, it remains very uncertain when, or in what quarter, it will be most wanted or can be best employed; and this will partly account for the great care you take to keep it from action and attacks, for should Burgoyne's fate be yours, which it probably will, England may take her endless farewell not only of all America but of all the West-Indies.

Never did a nation invite destruction upon itself with the eagerness and ignorance with which Britain has done. Bent upon the ruin of a young and unoffending country, she hath drawn the sword that hath wounded herself to the heart, and in the agony of her resentment hath applied a poison for a cure. Her conduct towards America is a compound of rage and lunacy; she aims at the government of it, yet preserves neither dignity nor character in her methods to obtain it. Were government a mere manufacture or article of commerce immaterial by whom it should be made or sold, we might as well employ her as another, but when we consider it as the fountain from whence the general manners and morality of a country take their rise, that the persons entrusted with the execution thereof are by their serious example and authority to support these principles, how abominably absurd is the idea of being hereafter governed by a set of men who have been guilty of forgery, perjury, treachery, theft, and every species of villainy which the lowest wretches on earth could practise or invent. What greater public curse can befall any country than to be under such authority, and what greater blessing than to be delivered therefrom. The soul of any man of sentiment would rise in brave rebellion against them and spurn them from the earth.

The malignant and venomous tempered Gen. Vaughan has amused his savage fancy in burning the whole town of Kingston, in York government, and the late Governor of that State, Mr. Tryon, in his letter to General Parsons, has endeavoured to justify it, and declared his wish to burn the houses of every Committee-man in the country. Such a confession from one who was once entrusted with the powers of civil government, is a reproach to the character.



rafter. But it is the wish and the declaration of a man whom anguish and disappointment have driven to despair, and who is daily decaying into the grave with constitutional rottenness.

There is not in the compass of language a sufficiency of words to express the baseness of your King, his Ministry and his Army. They have refined upon villainy till it wants a name. To the fiercer vices of former ages they have added the dregs and scummings of the most finished rascality, and are so compleatly sunk in serpentine deceit, that there is not left among them *one* generous enemy.

From such men and such masters may the gracious hand of Heaven preserve America ! And though the sufferings she now endures are heavy and severe, they are like straws in the wind compared to the weight of evils she would feel under the government of your King, and his pensioned Parliament.

There is something in meanness which excites a species of resentment that never subsides, and something in cruelty which stirs up the heart to the highest agony of human hatred ; Britain hath filled up both these characters till no addition can be made, and hath not reputation left with us to obtain credit for the slightest promise. The will of God hath parted us, and the deed is registered for eternity. When she shall be a spot scarcely visible among the nations, America shall flourish the favorite of Heaven and the friend of mankind.

For the domestic happiness of Britain and the peace of the world I wish she had not a foot of land but what is circumscribed within her own island. Extent of dominion hath been her ruin, and instead of civilizing others hath brutalized herself. Her late reduction of India under Clive and his successors, was not so properly a conquest as an extermination of mankind. She is the only power who could practise the prodigal barbarity of tying men to the mouths of loaded cannon and blowing them away. It happens that General Burgoyne, who made the report of that horrid transaction in the House of Commons, is now a prisoner with us, and though an enemy, I can appeal to him for the truth of it, being

confident that he neither can nor will deny it. Yet Clive received the approbation of the last Parliament.

When we take a survey of mankind we cannot help cursing the wretch, who, to the unavoidable misfortunes of nature shall wilfully add the calamities of war. One would think there were evils enough in the world without studying to increase them, and that life is sufficiently short without shaking the sand that measures it. The histories of Alexander, and Charles of Sweden, are the histories of human devils; a good man cannot think of their actions without abhorrence nor of their deaths without rejoicing. To see the bounties of Heaven destroyed, the beautiful face of nature laid waste, and the choicest works of creation and art tumbled into ruin, would fetch a curse from the soul of piety itself. But in this country the aggravation is heightened by a new combination of affecting circumstances. America was young, and, compared with other countries, was virtuous. None but a Herod of uncommon malice would have made war upon infancy and innocence, and none but a people of the most finished fortitude dared, under those circumstances, have resisted the tyranny. The natives, or their ancestors, had fled from the former oppressions of England, and with the industry of bees had changed a wilderness into a habitable world. To Britain they were indebted for nothing. The country was the gift of Heaven, and God alone is their Lord and Sovereign.

The time, Sir, will come when you, in a melancholy hour, shall reckon up your miseries by your murders in America. Life, with you, begins to wear a clouded aspect. The vision of pleasurable delusion is wearing away, and changing to the barren wild of age and sorrow. The poor reflection of having served your King will yield you no consolation in your parting moments. He will crumble to the same undistinguished ashes with yourself, and have sins enough of his own to answer for. It is not the farcical benedictions of a Bishop, nor the cringing hypocrisy of a court of Chaplains, nor the formality of an act of Parliament, that can change guilt into innocence, or make the punishment *one* pang the less. You may, perhaps,

perhaps, be unwilling to be serious, but this destruction of the goods of Providence, this havoc of the human race, and this sowing the world with mischief, must be accounted for to him who made and governs it. To us they are only present sufferings, but to him they are deep rebellions.

If there is a sin superior to every other it is that of willful and offensive war. Most other sins are circumscribed within narrow limits, that is, the power of *one* man cannot give them a very general extension, and many kind of sins have only a mental existence from which no infection arises; but he who is the author of a war, lets loose the whole contagion of Hell, and opens a vein that bleeds a nation to death. We leave it to England and Indians to boast of these honors; we feel no thirst for such savage glory; a nobler flame, a purer spirit animates America. She hath taken up the sword of virtuous defence; she hath bravely put herself between Tyranny and Freedom, between a curse and a blessing, determined to expel the one, and protect the other.

It is the object only of war that makes it honorable. And if there were ever *a just* war since the world began, it is this which America is now engaged in. She invaded no land of yours. She hired no mercenaries to burn your towns, nor Indians to massacre their inhabitants. She wanted nothing from you and was indebted for nothing to you; and thus circumstanced, her defence is honorable and her prosperity certain.

Yet it is not on the *justice* only, but likewise on the *importance* of this cause that I ground my seeming enthusiastical confidence of our success. The vast extension of America makes her of *too much* value in the scale of Providence, to be cast, like a pearl before swine, at the feet of a European island; and of much less consequence would it be that Britain were sunk in the sea than that America should miscarry. There has been such a chain of extraordinary events in the discovery of this country at first, in the peopling and planting it afterwards, in the rearing and nursing it to its present State, and in the protection of it through the present war, that no man can doubt, but Providence hath some nobler end to accomplish than the gratification of the petty Elector of Hanover or the ignorant and insignificant King of Britain.

As the blood of the martyrs hath been the seed of the Christian Church, so the political persecutions of England will, and



hath already enriched America with industry, experience, union and importance. Before the present æra she was a mere chaos of uncemented Colonies, individually exposed to the ravages of the Indians and the invasion of any power that Britain should be at war with. She had nothing she could call her own. Her felicity depended upon accident. The convulsions of Europe might have thrown her from one conqueror to another, till she had been the slave of all and ruined by every one; for until she had spirit enough to become her own master, there was no knowing to which master she should belong. *That* period, thank God, is past, and she is no longer the dependent, disunited Colonies of Britain, but the independent and united States of America, knowing no master but Heaven and herself. You or your King may call this "Delusion," "Rebellion," or what name you please. To us it is perfectly indifferent. The issue will determine the character and Time will give it a name as lasting as his own.

You have now, Sir, tried the fate of three campaigns, and can fully declare to England, that nothing is to be got on your part but blows and broken bones, and nothing on hers but waste of trade and credit and an encrease of poverty and taxes. You are now only where you might have been two years ago without the loss of a single ship, and yet not a step the forwarder towards the conquest of the Continent; because, as I have already hinted, "An army in a city can never be a conquering army." The full amount of your losses since the beginning of the war exceeds twenty thousand men, besides millions of treasure for which you have nothing in exchange. Our expences, though great, are circulated within ourselves. Yours is a direct sinking of money, and that from both ends at once, first in hiring troops out of the nation, and in paying them afterwards, because the money in neither case can return again to Britain. We are already in possession of the prize, you only in suit for it. To us it is a real treasure, to you it would be only an empty triumph. Our expences will repay themselves with ten-fold interest, while yours entail upon you everlasting poverty.

Take a review, Sir, of the ground you have gone over, and let it teach you policy, if it cannot honesty. You stand but on a very tottering foundation. A change of the Ministry in England may probably bring your measures into question and your head to the block. Clive, with all his successes, had some difficulty

sicuity in escaping, and yours being all a war of losses, will afford you less pretensions and your enemies more grounds for impeachment.

Go home, Sir, and endeavor to save the remains of your ruined country by a just representation of the madness of her measures. A few moments well applied may yet preserve her from political destruction. I am not one of those who wish to see Europe in a flame, because I am persuaded such an event will not shorten the war. The rupture, at present, is confined between the two powers of America and England. England finds she cannot conquer America, and America has no wish to conquer England. You are fighting for what you can never obtain, and we defending what we mean never to part with. A few words, therefore, settle the bargain. Let England mind her own business and we will mind ours. Govern yourselves and we will govern ourselves. You may then trade where you please unmolested by us, and we will trade where we please unmolested by you; and such articles as we can purchase of each other better than elsewhere may be mutually done. If it were possible that you could carry on the war for twenty years you must still come to this point at last, or worse, and the sooner you think of it the better it will be for you.

My official situation enables me to know the repeated insults which Britain is obliged to put up with from foreign powers, and the wretched shifts she is driven to, to gloss them over. Her reduced strength and exhausted coffers in a three years war with America have given a powerful superiority to France and Spain. She is not now a match for them — But if neither counsels can prevail on her to think, nor sufferings awaken her to reason, she must e'en go on, till the honor of England becomes a proverb of contempt, and Europe dub her the Land of Fools.

I am, Sir,

With every wish for an honorable peace,

Your friend, enemy, and countryman,

COMMON SENSE.

YORK-TOWN,  
March 18, 1778.

T.

## TO THE INHABITANTS OF AMERICA.

WITH all the pleasure with which a man exchanges bad company for good, I take my leave of Sir William and return to you. It is now nearly three years since the tyranny of Britain received its first repulse by the arms of America. A period, which has given birth to a new world and erected a monument to the folly of the old.

I cannot help being sometimes surprised at the complimentary references which I have seen and heard made to antient histories and transactions. The wisdom, civil governments, and sense of honor of the States of Greece and Rome, are frequently held up as objects of excellence and imitation. Mankind have lived for very little purpose, if, at this period of the world, they must go two or three thousand years back for lessons and examples. We do dishonourary injustice to ourselves by placing them in such a superior line. We have no just authority for it, neither can we tell why it is that we should suppose ourselves inferior.

Could the mist of antiquity be taken away, and men and things viewed as they then really were, it is more than probable that they would admire us, rather than we them. America has surmounted a greater variety and combination of difficulties than, I believe, ever fell to the share of any one people in the same space of time, and has replenished the world with more useful knowledge and sounder maxims of civil government than were ever produced in any age before. Had it not been for America there had been no such thing as freedom left throughout the whole universe. England hath lost hers in a long chain of right reasoning from wrong principles, and it is from this country now she must learn the resolution to redress herself, and the wisdom how.

The Grecians and Romans were strongly possessed of the *spirit* of liberty but *not* the *principle*, for at the time they were determined not to be slaves themselves, they employed their power to enslave the rest of mankind. But this distinguished æra is blotted by no one misanthropical vice. In short, if the *principle* on which the cause is founded, the universal blessings that are to arise from it, the difficulties that accompanied it, the wisdom with which it has been debated, the fortitude by which it has been supported, the strength of the power we had to oppose, and the condition in which we undertook



dertook it, be all taken in one view, we may justly stile it the most virtuous and illustrious revolution that ever graced the history of mankind.

A good opinion of ourselves is exceedingly necessary in private life, but absolutely necessary in public life, and of the utmost importance in supporting national character. I have no notion of yielding the palm of the United States to any Grecians or Romans that were ever born. We have equalled the bravest in times of danger, and excelled the wisest in the construction of civil governments, *no one in America excepted.*

From this agreeable eminence let us take a review of present affairs. The spirit of corruption is so inseparably interwoven with British politics, that their Ministry suppose all mankind are governed by the same motive. They have no idea of a people submitting even to temporary inconvenience from an attachment to rights and privileges. Their plans of business are calculated by the hour and for the hour, and are uniform in nothing but the corruption which gives them birth. They never had, neither have they at this time, any regular plan for the conquest of America by arms. They know not how to go about it, neither have they power to effect it if they could know. The thing is not within the compass of human practicability, for America is too extensive either to be fully conquered or *passively* defended. But she may be *actively* defended by defeating or making prisoners of the army that invades her. And this is the only system of defence that can be effectual in a large country.

There is something in a war carried on by invasion which makes it differ in circumstances from any other mode of war, because he who conducts it cannot tell whether the ground he gains, be for him, or against him, when he first makes it. In the winter seventy six General Howe marched with an air of victory through the Jerseys, the consequence of which was his defeat, and General Burgoyne at Saratoga experienced the same fate from the same cause. The Spaniards about two years ago were defeated by the Algerines in the same manner, that is, their first triumphs became a trap in which they were totally routed. And whoever will attend to the circumstances and events of a war carried on by invasion, will find, that any invader, in order to be finally conquered must first begin to conquer.

I confess myself one of those who believe the loss of Philadelphia to be attended with more advantages than injuries. The  
case

case stood thus. The enemy imagined Philadelphia to be of more importance to us than it really was; for we all know that it had long ceased to be a port, not a cargo of goods had been brought into it for near a twelve-month, nor any fix'd manufactories, nor even ship-building carried on in it; yet as the enemy believed the conquest of it to be practicable, and to that belief added the absurd idea that the soul of all America was centered there and would be conquered there, it naturally follows, that their possession of it, by not answering the end proposed, must break up the plans they had so foolishly gone upon, and either oblige them to form a new one, for which their present strength is not sufficient, or to give over the attempt.

We never had so small an army to fight against, nor so fair an opportunity of final success as *now*. The death wound is already given. The day is our own if we follow it up. The enemy by his situation is within our reach, and by his reduced strength is within our power. The Ministers of Britain may rage as they please, but our part is to conquer their armies. Let them wrangle and welcome, but let it not draw our attention from the *one* thing needful. *Here, in this spot* is our business to be accomplished, our felicity secured. What we have now to do is as clear as light, and the way to do it is as strait as a line. It needs not to be commented upon, yet, in order to be perfectly understood, I will put a case that cannot admit of a mistake.

Had the armies under the Generals Howe and Burgoyne been united and taken post at Germantown, and had the Northern army under General Gates been joined to that under General Washington at Whitemarsh, the consequence would have been a general action; and if in that action we had killed and taken the same number of officers and men, that is, between nine and ten thousand, with the same quantity of artillery, arms, stores, &c. as have been taken to the Northward, and obliged General Howe with the remains of his army, that is, with the same number he now commands, to take shelter in Philadelphia, we should certainly have thought ourselves the greatest heroes in the world; and should, as soon as the season permitted, have collected together all the force of the Continent and laid siege to the city, for it requires a much greater force to besiege an enemy in a town than to defeat them in the field. The case *now* is just the same as if it had been produced by the means I have  
here

here supposed. Between nine and ten thousand have been killed and taken, all their stores are in our possession, and General Howe, in consequence of that victory, has thrown himself for shelter into Philadelphia. He, or his trifling friend Galloway, may form what pretences they please, yet no just reason can be given for their going into winter quarters so early as the 19th of October, but their apprehension of a defeat if they continued out, or their conscious inability of keeping the field with safety. I see no advantage which can arise to America by hunting the enemy from State to State. It is a triumph without a prize, and wholly unworthy the attention of a people determined to conquer. Neither can any State promise itself security while the enemy remain in a condition to transport themselves from one part of the Continent to another. Howe, likewise, cannot conquer where we have no army to oppose, therefore any such removals in him are mean and cowardly, and reduces Britain to a common pilferer. If he retreats from Philadelphia, he will be despised; if he stays, he may be shut up and starved out, and the country, if he advances into it, may become his Saratoga. He has his choice of evils and we of opportunities. If he moves early, it is not only a sign but a proof that he expects no reinforcement, and his delays will prove that he either waits for the arrival of a plan to go upon, or force to execute it, or both; in *which* case, our strength will encrease more than his, therefore in *any* case we cannot be wrong if we do but proceed.

The particular condition of Pennsylvania deserves the attention of all the other States. Her military strength must not be estimated by the number of inhabitants. Here are men of all nations, characters, professions and interests. Here are the firmest Whigs, surviving, like sparks in the ocean, unquenched and uncooled in the midst of discouragement and disaffection. Here are men losing their all with cheerfulness, and collecting fire and fortitude from the flames of their own estates. Here are others skulking in secret, many making a market of the times, and numbers who are changing Whig and Tory with the circumstances of every day.

It is by meer dint of fortitude and perseverance that the Whigs of this State have been able to maintain so good a countenance, and do even what they have done. We want help, and the sooner it can arrive the more effectual it will be. The invaded State, be it which it may, will always feel an additional



enat burthen upon its back, and be hard set to support its civil power with sufficient authority; and this difficulty will always rise or fall, in proportion as the other States throw in their assistance to the common cause.

The enemy will most probably make many manœuvres at the opening of this campaign, to amuse and draw off the attention of the several States from the *one thing needful*. We may expect to hear of alarms and pretended expeditions to *this* place and *that* place, to the Southward, the Eastward and the Northward, all intended to prevent our forming into one formidable body. The less the enemy's strength is, the more subtleties of this kind will they make use of. Their existence depends upon it, because the force of America, when collected, is sufficient to swallow their present army up. It is therefore our business to make short work of it, by bending our whole attention to *this one principal point*, for the instant that the main body under General Howe is defeated, all the inferior alarms throughout the Continent, like so many shadows, will follow his downfall.

The only way to finish a war with the least possible bloodshed, or perhaps without any, is to collect an army, against the power of which, the enemy shall have no chance. By not doing this, we prolong the war, and double both the calamities and the expences of it. What a rich and happy country would America be, were she, by a vigorous exertion, to reduce Howe as she has reduced Burgoyne. Her currency would rise to millions beyond its present value. Every man would be rich, and every man would have it in his power to be happy. And why not do these things? What is there to hinder? America is her own mistress and can do what she pleases.

If we had not at this time a man in the field, we could, nevertheless, raise an army in a few weeks sufficient to overwhelm all the force which General Howe at present commands. Vigor and determination will do any thing and every thing. We began the war with this kind of spirit, why not end it with the same? Here, Gentlemen, is the enemy. Here is the army. The interest, the happiness, of all America is centered in this half ruined spot. Come on and help us. Here are laurels, come and share them. Here are Tories, come and help us to expel them. Here are Whigs that will make you welcome, and enemies that dread your coming.

The

The worst of all policy is that of doing things by halves. Penny-wile and pound foolish has been the ruin of thousands. The present spring, if rightly improved, will free us from all our troubles, and save us the expence of millions. We have now only one army to cope with. No opportunity can be fairer; no prospect more promising. I shall conclude this paper with a few outlines of a plan either for filling up the battalions with expedition, or for raising an additional force for any limited time, on any sudden emergency.

That in which every man is interested is every man's duty to support. And any burthen which falls equally on all men, and, from which every man is to receive an equal benefit, is consistent with the most perfect ideas of liberty. I would wish to revive something of that virtuous animation which first called America into the field. Then every man was eager to do his part, and perhaps the principal reason why we have in any degree fallen therefrom, is, because we did not set a sufficient value by it at first, but left it to blaze out of itself, instead of regulating and preserving it by just proportions of rest and service.

Suppose any State whose number of effective inhabitants were 80,000, should be required to furnish 3200 men towards the defence of the Continent on any very sudden emergency.

First, Let the whole number of effective inhabitants be divided into hundreds; then if each of those hundreds turn out four men, the whole number of 3200 will be had.

2dly, Let the names of each hundred men be entered in a book, and let four dollars be collected from each man, with as much more as any of the gentlemen whose abilities can afford it shall please to throw in, which gifts shall likewise be entered against the donors names.

3dly, Let the sums so collected be offered as a present, over and above the bounty of twenty dollars, to any four who may be inclined to propose themselves as volunteers; if more than four offer, the majority of the subscribers present shall determine which; if none offers, then four out of the hundred shall be taken by lot, who shall be entitled to the said sums, and shall either go, or provide others that will, in the space of six days.

4thly, As it will always happen, that in the space of ground on which any hundred men shall live, there will always be a number of persons who, by age and infirmity, are incapable of doing

doing personal service, and as such persons are generally possessed of the greatest part of the property in any country, their portion of service, therefore, will be to furnish each man with a blanket, which will make a regimental coat jacket and breeches, or cloaths in lieu thereof, and another for a watch cloak, and two pair of shoes—for however choice people may be of these things matters not in cases of this kind—Those who live always in houses can find many ways to keep themselves warm, but it is a shame and a sin to suffer a soldier in the field to want a blanket while there is one in the country.

Should the cloathing not be wanted, the superannuated or infirm persons possessing property, may, in lieu thereof, throw in their money subscriptions towards encreasing the bounty, for though age will naturally exempt a person from personal service, it cannot exempt him from his share of the charge, because the men are raised for the defence of property and liberty jointly.

There never was a scheme against which objections might not be raised. But this alone is not a sufficient reason for rejection. The only line to judge truly upon, is, to draw out and admit all the objections which can fairly be made, and place against them all the contrary qualities, conveniences and advantages, then by striking a balance you come at the true character of any scheme, principle or position.

The most material advantages of the plan here proposed are ease, expedition, and cheapness; yet the men so raised get a much larger bounty than is any where at present given; because all the expences, extravagance, and consequent idleness of recruiting are saved or prevented. The country incurs no new debt, nor interest thereon; the whole matter being all settled at once and entirely done with. It is a subscription answering all the purposes of a tax, without either the charge or trouble of collecting. The men are ready for the field with the greatest possible expedition, because it becomes the duty of the inhabitants themselves, in every part of the country, to find up their proportion of men, instead of leaving it to a recruiting Serjeant, who, be he ever so industrious, cannot know always where to apply.

I do not propose this as a regular digested plan, neither will the limits of this paper admit of any further remarks upon it. I believe it to be a hint capable of much improvement, and as such submit it to the Public.

COMMON SENSE.

Lancaster, March 21, 1778.